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AN

EARNEST and AFFECTIONATE

ADDRESS

TO THE

Common People

OF

ENGLAND,

Concerning their

Usual RECREATIONS

ON

SHROVE TUESDAY.

LONDON:

Printed by J. OLIVER, in *Bartholomew-Close*, near *West-Smithfield*.

[Price 2 *s.* 6 *d. per Hundred* to give away.]

My dear Friends and Countrymen,

PERMIT me to addreſs myſelf to You at this Seaſon, and to expoſtulate with you in a loving, friendly Manner, concerning the abominable Practice of *Throwing at Cocks*, and to beſeech You to ſet a good Example this Year, by leaving off ſo bad a Cuſtom. I am no Enemy, I do aſſure You, to *reaſonable* and *manly* Recreations. I could wiſh, that *pitching* the *Bar*, *throwing* the *Sledge*, or a *weighty Stone*, *Leaping* and *Wreſtling*, and ſuch like Sports, were more in Uſe. They tend to Health and Strength; they inſpire Courage and Activity; and would contribute to make Us an hardy, ſtout Race of Men, ſuch as our Fore fathers were.

But *Cock-Throwing* is a moſt UNMANLY and CRUEL Diverſion, a SHAME and a REPROACH to our Country, and OFFENSIVE to GOD.

GIVE me leave to tell You, my dear Countrymen, that it is a moſt UNMANLY Diverſion. For what *Trial of Manhood*, or what *Proof of Strength* or *Activity* is there, in overcoming a poor Creature that can make no Reſiſtance, and has not ſo much as the Power of running away? — What *Glory* would it be to beat a Perſon, and to inſult over him, when he is your Priſoner, chained down, and lying at your Mercy? And, let me add, What Need is there at all to place a *living* Creature as a *Mark* to be thrown at, which has *Senſe* and *Feeling* as well as You and I; ſeeing that a Stick or a Stone would have done as well?

IT is likewiſe a moſt CRUEL and BARBAROUS Diverſion. For it is the very Heighth of Cruelty to cauſe a poor *innocent* Creature, that never gave you any Provocation, to ſuffer *lingering Tortures* for meer Sport and Wantonneſs. Whether the Creature is hit or miſſed at each Throw, You raiſe in it the moſt inconceivable Anguiſh: For even if You miſs it, You put it into dreadful *Fears* and *Agonies*; and if You hit it, You *mangle* and *bruiſe*, as well as *affright* it. And what ſhocking Paſtime is this, to make the *Fears*, *Cries*, *Pains*, *Wounds*, and *Agonies* of any Thing that has *Senſe* and *Feeling*, the Object of One's *Mirth* and *Diverſion!*

PERHAPS You will ſay, That You did not conſider the Matter in that View. But whether You did or not, You cannot but acknowledge, that You were ſenſible the Creature felt Pain, and ſhewed, by all the Ways

it was capable, how miſerable and diſtreſſed it was in that Situation. — How often have you ſeen it *endeavour* to *avoid* the Stroke as it was a coming? How often have you heard it cry out, as well as it could, beſeeching, as it were, Your Pity and Compaſſion? — And if it could have ſpoke, how juſtly might it have reproached You for want of Tenderneſs and Humanity? — It would have been an Act of Mercy in You to have diſpatched it at *One* Blow. But *Cock-Throwing* is of ſo *cruel* a Nature, that the *longer* the poor Creature is kept alive in Pain and Miſery, the *better* and *more Sport.*

SURELY then, the *Continuance* of ſuch a *barbarous* Diverſion muſt neceſſarily be a very great SHAME and REPROACH to our Country. What can *Strangers* and *Foreigners* think of Us, when they ſee, or are told of ſuch *Unmanly* and *Cruel* Sports? — Indeed, if You will bear to hear Truth and plain Dealing, it is on the Ac-

count of ſuch Diverſions as theſe, that they give Us abroad the Character of a *Blood thirſty* and *inhuman* People. And as long as theſe Sports continue, Is there not too much Reaſon for the Charge? And ſhould they conclude, that at the Bottom we have not that *Bravery* and *Courage* which we pretend to; we muſt confeſs, that We Ourſelves are the Cauſe of ſuch a Suſpicion, by ſhewing that we take ſo much Delight in *Cruelty* and *Barbarity*. For it has been obſerved, that *Cowardice* and *Cruelty* generally go together: Whereas *Generoſity* and *Humanity* are the ſure Proofs of a *brave* and *dauntleſs* Mind. It muſt be a bitter *Reproach* to Us, that We have a Cuſtom ſtill kept up among us ſo *cruel* and *inhuman*, unknown to the moſt *Savage* and *Barbarous* Nations. The *Turks* are remarkably Compaſſionate and Kind towards *dumb Creatures*. — Oh, that it could be ſaid, We were ſo in *England!*

BUT above all, my dear Countrymen, ſuch a Diverſion as this is highly offenſive to Almighty GOD. It hath pleaſed Him, out of his great Bounty, to give Us *all* the Creatures for our Uſe and Service; but We have not a Permiſſion to abuſe *any* of them. A *Righteous Man*, ſaith the Scripture, *regardeth the Life of his Beaſt*. Every *Good Man* therefore will be careful not to *over-work* his *Cattle*, by continual Labour: He will allow them Times of *Eaſe* and *Refreſhment*: He will not feed them *poorly* or *pinchingly*: They ſhall have what is proper and ſufficient: Much leſs will he *beat* and *abuſe* them *unneceſſarily*, or make them *ſtrain* under an *unconſcionable Load*, beyond their Strength. And a *Good Man*, when he is to kill any Beaſt for *Food*, will diſpatch him in as *ſpeedy* a Manner, and put him to as *little* Pain as he *poſſibly can*.

Now, dear Sirs, judge for Yourſelves, whether a *Cock-Thrower* deſerves

ſerves the Character of a *Righteous* or *Good Man*. Doth he regard the *Life of that poor Creature?* Is he *merciful* to it? Doth he *treat* that Creature of GOD as GOD *intended* he ſhould, when He gave Us the Uſe of all his Creatures? And can You think, that he will not be anſwerable for the *Cruelty* and *Barbarity* he exerciſes in that Reſpect? — I might add likewiſe, how *unſuitable* ſuch a Practice is to the *Beginning* of *Lent*; a Time more particularly ſet apart for ſolemn *Repentance* and *Humiliation*, and for *breaking off* all *evil* Practices and *ſinful* Diſpoſitions.

BUT I am ſatisfied, my dear Countrymen, You are thoroughly convinced in Your Conſciences, by what has been already ſaid, that You ought to *leave off* this *barbarous* and *deteſtable* Cuſtom. And let me beſeech You earneſtly to do it. Take in good Part what has been ſaid; for it is *honeſtly* and *well-intended*. It is a glorious

ous Thing to correct One's Errors, and to grow wiſer and better; and this Glory will be Yours, if You will lead the Way, and ſhew a good Example this Year, by *diſcontinuing* a Cuſtom, which has every Thing in it that deſerves to be forſaken and abhorred. There is no SHAME in *reforming* a bad Practice; but it is a very great SHAME, and a great SIN to *continue* in it, after it is *known* to be *bad*. An *Engliſhman* has many *good* Qualities in him: He is naturally *brave*, *generous*, and *compaſſionate*: For GOD's Sake therefore, for the Sake of Your *Ownſelves*, and for the *Honour* of Your *Country*, do not *diſgrace* ſo *many* good Qualities, by *one unmanly*, *cruel*, *ſhameful*, and *wicked* Practice of *Cock Throwing*.

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